

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 8 and 9 are pending in this application, of which claims 2, 3 and 8 have been amended. Claims 1, 4-7 and 10 are canceled. No new claims have been added.

Claims 2, 3, 8 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Sugahara (previously applied).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Among other things, the Examiner has indicated:

Applicants' arguments filed April 13, 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicants argue, with regard to claim 2, that through-holes are formed in the molded article of the present invention while in Sugahara, such holes are not formed because the teeth are retracted after filling the starting material beads. But claim 2 is silent with regard to the presence or absence of through-holes.

FIGS. 9(a) and 10(a) show the first embodiment of the present invention, in which a plurality of through-holes 9B, 9C are formed in cores 1B, 1C at locations corresponding to teeth 44, as disclosed on page 64, lines 8-11 of the specification of the instant application.

In addition, Sugahara fails to teach, mention or suggest that the holes of the molded articles are through-holes or holes having bottoms, and that the holes are made by teeth, as in the present invention.

Accordingly, claims 2 and 8 have been amended to clarify these distinctions.

Claim 3 has been amended to recite that when air orifices are completely omitted, steam or bead starting material is supplied into a cavity through a clearance, which is not taught or suggested by Sugahara.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has stated:

Concerning through-holes of molds, Applicants argue that in claim 2 of the present invention, teeth are fixed while in Sugahara, through-holes 24 for teeth are formed in the molds. This is not persuasive because the language of claim 2 is such that the teeth would only need be fixed for a moment in time for the claims to be readable on Sugahara...

Applicants' arguments concerning complexity of mold structure, relative to that of Sugahara, and potential bending of teeth due to the pressure of starting materials, are noted by the examiner, but they appear not to be commensurate in scope with the claims at issue...

With regard to these assumptions, the claims have been amended in order to clarify that through-holes of the teeth are formed in neither a core mold nor a cavity mold, wherein it is clear that proximal ends of the fixed partitioning members are fixed on a surface at a side of mold chambers (i.e., inner wall) of the core mold and the cavity mold.

Thus, the proximal ends of the fixed partitioning members are fixed on the surface at the side of mold chambers (i.e., inner wall) of the core mold and the cavity mold, in addition, through-holes of the teeth are formed in neither the core mold nor the cavity mold. As a result, the following benefits can be obtained. (The following features are described in the originally filed specification.)

1. Sugahara suffers from a problem in that the partitioning members become immovable when the partitioning members are deformed or broken by contacting with the inner wall of passage orifices due to mold expansion or contraction. However, such a problem is prevented in the present invention (see lines 19-22 of page 124).

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/617,091
Response to Office Action dated June 22, 2006

2. The need for a drive system to drive the partitioning members is obviated, allowing the design of the in-mold foam molding apparatus to be significantly simplified, reducing the costs of fabricating the in-mold foam molding apparatus (see lines 18-22 of page 27).
3. Since the need to provide the mold with passage orifices for passage of partitioning members is obviated, the problem of flash formation resulting from infiltration of bead starting materials into the passage orifices or infiltration between a passage orifice and the partitioning members situated therein is prevented (see lines 7-12 of page 28).
4. Localized reductions in mold strength resulting from the passage orifices is prevented, and molding precision may be improved (see lines 12-14 of page 28).

Thus, the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejection should be withdrawn.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 2, 3, 8 and 9, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/617,091
Response to Office Action dated June 22, 2006

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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